Davies Mayor.

Martis quarto die *Septembris*, 1677. Annoq; Regni Regis CAROLI Secundi, *Angliæ*, &c. Vicesimo Nono.

THis Court doth earnestly desire Mr. Thorp to Print his Sermon Preached at the Guild-Hall Chappel, on Sunday Morning last, before the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of this City.

Wagstaffe.

Imprimatur.

Septemb. 6. 1677.

T. Turner, R. P. D. D° Episc. Lond. à Sacris Domest.

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B.

A SERMON

Preached before the

RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE

Lord Mayor,

AND

ALDERMEN of LONDON,

AT

GUILD-HALL CHAPPEL.

By *George Thorp*, B. D. Fellow of *Gonvil* and *Caius* Colledg in *Cambridg*, and Rector of St. *Antholins*, and St. *John Baptists*, *London*.

LONDON:
Printed by *Andrew Clark*, for *Walter Kettilby*, at the Bishops Head in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard, 1677.

UMI

To the Right Honorable

Sir *THOMAS DAVIES*,

Lord Mayor

Of the City of

LONDON;

And the Court of

ALDERMEN.

Right Honorable,

WHat you were pleased to hear with so favourable approbation, as to enjoyn this farther Publication (for so I have learn'd to interpret the condescending desires of my Superiors) I here humbly present to your like favourable

able Patronage. I dare promiſe nothing for my performance; but may (I think) preſume ſo much upon the ſubject, as to judg him fallen out with himſelf, as all the World beſide, who is not willing to make his frequent appeals thereto. If the Countenance of your Authority, to its own inward Evidence, recommend it more to the Serious Meditations and diligent Obſervance of all, eſpecially of this Great and Honorable City; I know nothing may contribute farther, under the Divine Bleſſing, to its moſt laſting Renown, and the increaſe of its Felicity to all Generations. Which is the Hearty Prayer of

Your Lordſhips

moſt Humble

and Obedient Servant,

Geo. Thorp.

MATTH. VII. 12.

Therefore all things, whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets.

AS among all the Civiliz'd part of Mankind, no Honors, and Commendations have been judg'd great enough to bestow upon Virtue in general; so no task has been found more difficult and perplext, than to deduce it readily, and safely into all the single Offices of Humane Life.

Not to insist at present on the immediate bounden expressions of Piety towards God, about which men always have been, and needs must be at the greatest loss, where his own expres declarations conduct them not, from the infinite distance of the object: In the more common, and obvious instances of Justice

Juſtice, and Benignity one towards another, which moſt acknowledg in the groſs reaſonable, and advantagious; yet few are thought ſo happy, or ſo faithful, as to follow them by ſtraight, and uninterrupted lines in their ſeveral deductions, and to accommodate them aright to all the emergent caſes incident to our converſe one with another.

After the relief, and directions lent us from Laws Divine, or Humane, the cleareſt Revelations of God, the moſt ſtudied, and emprov'd Reaſonings of the wiſeſt of men ſpent therein, whether through ignorance, or prejudice, ſtubbornneſs, or malice, ſcarce any precept hath been found ſo plain, any conviction ſo unexceptionable, which ſome men will not evade, or elude, firſt make intricate, and then fruſtrate, diſpute themſelves into a loſs about it, and then conclude with almoſt a full exemption from it, and that in purſuit of every fancied (however lawleſs) intereſt, or groundleſs humor.

Farther, The circumſtances of our actions are open to ſuch almoſt infinite variety, and accordingly the reaſons, and meaſures of Commands, and our Obligations altering; It will be found a matter of ſome intricacy to the moſt

moſt upright and wary, without danger or miſtake, duly and haſtily to apply all general injunctions to each ſingle act. Wherefore after the largeſt proviſions of particular Precepts of all ſorts, ſome general Rules we have given to direct us, where others may come ſhort, or we ſeem at a loſs about them. Among which, none more full and comprehenſive than this of my Text, which hath gaind it the moſt univerſal admiration and applauſe, even from thoſe that obſerve, or thoſe that obſerve it not; from the Enemies, as Friends to our ſacred profeſſion. So that *Alexander Severus* the *Roman* Emperor, is reported to have Engrav'd it on the Walls of his Palace, and other Publick Buildings, as it were a ſtanding Law of his Empire, and the beſt ſquare of his own, and others proceedings in the Adminiſtration thereof. As our Lord in my Text declares it to have been of God himſelf under the Old Teſtament. He no leſs Eſtabliſhing it for future Generations under the New.

Ælius Lampridius. *p.* 376. *in vita ejus.*

In Treating of which I ſhall, Firſt, inquire into the proper extent of this Rule, to vindicate it from ſome falſe applications, and aſſign it, as near as I can, its true boundaries.

2. The apparent Reasonableness, Justice, and Equity thereof.

3. The plain easiness, and suitableness of it to present use.

4. The Divine Authority, and Sanction of it from the last words.

In order to the former I observe, First, This does not make other mens dealings with us, the Rule of our dealing with them.

It is not whatsoever men do to you, but, *Whatsoever ye would they should do to you*, &c. Which otherwise might open a gap to all injustice, fraud or violence. It must not pass for a Maxim here, whatever it do in mens Practice, *Fallere fallentem non est fraus.* Men are very apt to think it a warrantable excuse, in the worst of their Actions, if they can but with any pretence say, I do but to him as he did to me, and give him, as they call it (I know not by what Figure) as good as he brought. So injuries, as well as animosities, are multiplied, and bandied from one to another, and contrary to all other violent motions, lose nothing, but gain still more and more in their rebound. Another mans injustice or cruelty doth not warrant, or alter the nature of mine, and though he began

gan first, yet no Reason or Precept will justifie my following him therein, which the more I complain of, the greater distance I ought to keep from it: and if in some instances it be no more than what may be just for him to suffer, yet in all, it's more than I have power to inflict; not to mention how partial Judges, and Executioners men would be in their own Causes, while the justest punishment, where it goes no farther, is not committed to every ones management; and private Revenge, in all Societies especially, stands convicted by the Laws of God, Nature, and Compact; and can have no shelter from this. If in any case of extreme violence, I may, *Vim vi repellere*, rather Kill than be Killed, when openly Assaulted, against the common rights of Human Society, by Thieves and Murderers; It is not so much their desert as my necessity, that must bear me out, wherein all Reason, and all Laws of God and Man judg it more equal, that the guilty should suffer, rather than the innocent, where one must presently, and in such an unavoidable exigence, may have affixt somwhat of a Publick Character on the last for his most necessary defence. But where this may be

otherwiſe ſecured, I muſt make my recourſe, and yield up my cauſe to the common guard, and moſt impartial determination of the Community, and of Him above all that judges therein, who hath ſaid *Vengeance is mine*: So I ſhould be willing to have done unto me, and if this ſeem to leave me under diſadvantage with thoſe who will not yet deal ſo with me; as it juſtifies them not in the leaſt, ſo will it more ſeverely condemn them for it hereafter; and in the mean time this reſtraint however uneaſie, may be lookt on as part of that *Self denial*, and *taking up the Croſs*, neceſſary not only to follow our Lord, but to enſure the peace and welfare of Humane Society.

2. Our own will and deſire for other mens dealings with us, taken in the groſs may be oft an unwarrantable, and at other times an incompetent Guide to ours with them. As if through any Diſtemper of body, or mind, prejudice, or miſapprehenſion, I wiſh for any thing that is really hurtful to my ſelf, I may not hence juſtly force it upon another. In oppoſition to which the Ancient Latin Copys, as St. *Auguſtin* obſerves, read it *quæcunque bona*, &c. But becauſe it will be yet controverted, what theſe good things are, and how to diſtinguiſh them;

T. 4. De Sermone Domini in monte. l. 2. p. 1168.

and

and beſides the caſe of thoſe who are uncapable of judging of any Law; and for whom another reſtraint is provided; beſide the caſe of Inferiors, and Superiors, as ſuch, which admits different conſiderations, that I ſhall meet with in my next; The miſapplications of this Rule in which our own inclinations may be apteſt, to impoſe on us, I reduce chiefly under this particular to two inſtances. I do not as I would be done unto, if I urge that upon another which he thinks hurtful, though I do not; becauſe I do not put my ſelf in his circumſtances, intirely, and ſo not to him, what I would expect from another, were I in his place, as this ſuppoſes.

Again, When the ground of my deſire, or expectation is ſome other by-conſideration, and not the equity of the Caſe it ſelf. As when I am willing any ſhould do ſomwhat to me, that I may have the advantage of doing the like to him; which in effect proves not the ſame. If I think my ſelf ſtronger than another, and ſo ſhould deſire he might take from me, what he could, that I might have the ſame liberty towards him, or others; here I do not really, what I would be willing to ſuffer, and yet where this may be materially

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the ſame, it varies much in the different condition of perſons and other circumſtances, too many to reckon up. In all which, as in the caſe before, I do not truly, and fully put my ſelf in his place, and ſtead. In oppoſition to them, the order of the words is exactly to be obſerved; the firſt part to be conſidered by it ſelf abſolutely, and not to follow any ſiniſter reſpect to the laſt, that is, abſtracted from other aims and deſigns: Whatever I ſhould chooſe, and think deſireable in it ſelf, and due to me in the ſame caſe, that I hereby bind my ſelf to, towards another, at leaſt when in my power. But not to invert the order of the words; Do what you will to any one, ſo you be willing they ſhould do it to you: Wherein we ſhall be eaſily miſtaken and blinded with prejudice and partiality, when we begin with that, and ſo proceed to this; as appears by too woful experience.

3. I may reaſonably ſuppoſe this Rule given not ſo much for a compleat Syſtem of all Juſtice, and Equity: But rather as a convenient relief, and Additionary Supply to all others, wherein ſeems to be the beſt, and ſafeſt, and conſtant uſe of it; where we are to ſeek for any other, or wholly at a loſs about its interpre-

terpretation, there this may extricate us out of a great many doubts. For though I ſuppoſe moſt of the Precepts, which concern our converſe with each other, may be fairly deduced from this (of which more in the Cloſe,) yet if any do not preſently appear ſo, they do not thence loſe their Obligation, neither are we free to every Action, which our judgment may make reconcileable herewith. For the Authority of God, which binds antecedently to this, or any other Law, may lay many engagements of Duty upon me towards other men, which I may be apt to think I ſhould not require from any, nay be unwilling to receive. Again I may have ſomwhat impos'd upon me by my Lawful Superiors, which I may be inclin'd to judg, I ſhould not injoin on them. In which the Caſe is not left to even debate, or my judgment to be determined by the reaſon of the thing alone, as it ſeems in the Text. In which alſo mankind are known naturally partial, and I may be ſuppoſed alſo more eaſily miſtaken than they, who ſtand upon much higher ground, and have a fuller and larger Proſpect of all about them, however the neceſſary Rights of juſt Authority to guard, and advance the true Honor and

Service

Service of God, and his Religion, with the Publick Peace, weigh much more (that I ſay not oblige much farther) than any private judgment, or intereſt: and wherein nothing abſolutely unlawful is enjoined, he that has the Commanding Power clears himſelf fully of this Rule, if, after all others, he do as he would be done unto, others cannot without that Reverence, and Obedience, which in like circumſtances they would expect from all, though they now obſtinately deny it. However the wills and inclinations of men in their own concerns, as well as others, are oft fickle, and various, received upon very uncertain grounds, and governed by very unaccountable prejudices, and it ſeems no way convenient, that the ſtrength of all Laws Divine, as Humane ſhould ſtand, or fall with ſuch weak and tottering ſupports, and be ſo long precarious, till they have ſtood their tryal, and received their doom from ſo frequent a partial, but always an inferior Judg. This Rule may ſuperadd a farther Obligation, but was never deſigned to exclude, or excuſe us from any former; where others fail this may ſupply the place of a particular injunction, and engage us to ſomwhat beyond what we thought

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ourſelves bound to before, not diſcharge us of any other Duty, ſeeing we can hardly imagine any good beyond what we wiſh to ourſelves, and are hereby ſo far engaged to others.

4. Some have thought this rather a Rule of Juſtice, than Charity. Indeed one of the Oriental Tranſlations renders it *quicquid æquum ducitis*. The ground of their limitation is, that I may lawfully deſire, or be willing another ſhould give me all he can without prejudice to himſelf; But am not hereby bound to do ſo to every other man, nay cannot. Yet I am not willing ſo to reſtrain it, ſeeing the uſe, and deſign of it ſeems to reach Acts of Charity, as common Juſtice, it may be to join them in one. So the way of our Saviours introducing, and connecting it to the former Verſe, may more clear under the laſt particular. In the mean time, for the mentioned inſtance, I may be willing to receive, what I do not think another bound to give. So *Whatſoever ye would* in my Text, is, whatever ye think or judg reaſonable, and equitable to expect from others, or that they are any way obliged to beſtow; that reciprocally binds, and that in Juſtice too. But in Acts of Liberality, I ought even in my deſires to leave another, as free, as I would be my ſelf, to lay them out where

the beſt Prudence may direct him. Charity is a large, and diffuſive Principle, not to be tied up to one Method, or confined always to the ſame meaſures; *ſeeketh not her own*, much more with common Juſtice reſtrains our coveting what is other mens. He that deſires always to be forgiven, and to be ever receiving, had need be as free in giving to, or forgiving others; or elſe he will not only fall ſhort of the Mercy, he asks, but fall under the ſtroke of that Juſtice, he violates. So I think I may determine, I ought to beſtow that upon another, which interchangeably in the like caſe, I ſhould think it reaſonable for me to hope, and expect from him; or elſe my deſires, or actions will be obnoxious to more guilt, than ordinary partiality. So far of the Explication in General, which it would be endleſs to purſue into extreme niceties, more apt to perplex, and confound, then explain the Precept to our readier obſervance.

Yet more particularly by way of Paraphraſe. No man is willing to be defrauded, or injured; to be impoſed on by falſhood, or treachery. None is deſirous to be reviled, or deſpiſed: every man is ſuppoſed to wiſh well unto himſelf, to have his perſon, and all that appertains to him ſafe from outward violence,

violence, or ſecret fraud; an evil eye, or as bad a Tongue, to have his Actions interpreted in the moſt favourable ſence, they are capable: all his good things advanc't; his evil as much as may be diminiſh't: In all inſtances go and do likewiſe. (*Nemo cùm ignorantiâ tenetur, non cupit doceri; quum labitur, amanter ac ſecretò moneri, potius quam traduci; nemo quum eget, non velit ſibi ſubveniri: Nemo velit obtrectari famæ ſuæ; Nemo fraudari, &c. Eraſmus par.*)

I am in the ſecond place to conſider the apparent reaſonableneſs, juſtice, and equity of the Rule, which has all the evidence poſſible to recommend it to the Univerſal approbation of mankind. Indeed it lies ſo near the firſt Principles, and Originals of all right Reaſon, and Equity, that it ſeems hard to derive it from any more clear, and ſelf-evident, and ſo far difficult to prove, as to find any other propoſition, that leſs needs proving: and yet ſome ſuch immediate ones, we muſt have recourſe to, or elſe all diſcourſe muſt be fruitleſs, we can have no foundation whereon to begin, or end to ſtop at. It hath oft fared the worſe with very important Truths, for lying near the Fountain head of all; while through Pride, Obſtinacy, or vain Curioſity, ſome men will hardly receive the prime verities of Nature, as well as Reli-

gion, without requiring a previous proof, which all men are not alike happy in managing, nor bind themſelves to the ſame Methods therein: Neither are under the ſame apprehenſions of Principles, and their conſequences; of which others, (though moſt unreaſonably) have taken ſuch advantage, as more to diſtruſt, or contemn that proved, which barely propounded, they could not but Reverence. The propoſition in my Text, ſeems as liable to run this hazard (if it have not already ſuffered thereby) as moſt others; which therefore I rather premiſe, that it may undergo no prejudice by my ſhort offers, which I reduce to a ſmall compaſs: and in which every ones own Meditations may add what poſſibly to him may ſeem more convincing.

Now with reſpect to thoſe who (if any) are moſt like to object againſt it, I may begin by conſidering how reconcileable it is with their own deareſt (if not only) Principle of Self-Love ſuppoſed therein, and truely confirmed thereby: than which nothing with ſuch may ſooner conclude it reaſonable. For becauſe it's taken for granted, that as we do, ſo we ought to wiſh well unto ourſelves, and can hardly knowingly do otherwiſe, therefore it's made the faireſt Rule, but not the only

only or beſt ground of our dealing ſo with others. Wherefore they who moſt contradict the purport of it towards them, are as rigid, and haſty as any, in exacting it towards themſelves. When we are bid *to love our Neighbour as ourſelves*, it's implied as we do, ſo we muſt and cannot but love ourſelves: Whereto infinite Appeals are made in all parts of Religion; and were it not preſuppoſed inviolably ſtrong, and univerſal, the Bands of Humane Society, and Commerce, as Converſe would be much looſened, which are now more ſtraightned by this Precept: We are hereby more than warranted to will what is good to ourſelves, while our doing it to others is ruled thereby; which (as all commands rightly conſidered) is ſo far from claſhing with true Self-Love, that it proves its ſafeſt guard. We do not what we ought by this Rule to others, if we wiſh not what is really beſt to ourſelves. But if this reach not the evidence of an intire proof, it may remove a conſiderable prejudice out of its way, which not done, ſcarce any other would be admitted.

2. To proceed gradually in matters wherein there is no neceſſary competition between my own and my Neighbours concerns, that is, where mens intereſts do not really interfere,

or

or what I do to another takes nothing properly from my ſelf, which yet oft happens, there nothing can carry more unexceptionable Evidence, than the Precept before us. As for inſtance to give good words, rather than bad; candid, and benign, rather than peeviſh, and fretful; to be more forward to comfort, than to vex; to heal, than to wound, to lift up, rather than to beat down; to conceal, rather than to expoſe anothers imperfections; to defend, ſooner than to accuſe; yea in many Offices of Beneficence, wherein I may relieve anothers neceſſity, or much promote his convenience, by that which I cannot keep, or if I do, it muſt be uſeleſs, or ſo inſignificant, that I ſhall be aſhamed to own it.

In theſe and ſuch like inſtances, what can carry greater conviction, than that the one part is more excellent, and eligible than the oppoſite, and yet almoſt as ſoon, and eaſily done? For I appeal to the moſt ſtupid, and prejudic'd, is it not better to ſave Life, than to deſtroy it? to be an inſtrument of anothers happineſs, than miſery? to love, than to hate? &c. that is, to do good, than to do evil? If there be no difference in things at all, but only in our Opinions: if, abſtracted from other conſiderations, one includes as much perfection as the other

ether (for what dare not ſome men aſſert?) Why in our own behalf are we ſo conſtantly determined in our choice to the one? ſo fearful of, and ready to fly from the other? needing neither force of Argument, or length of Meditation to ſecure our preference. An immediate Conviction, that they are as oppoſite in their own Natural tendency as our thoughts; and that we can as ſoon ceaſe to deſire what is good, as ſuch, as not think it to be placed in thoſe things, which this Rule directs us in to all. Now if what I wiſh to my ſelf, or would have others do to me be better than the oppoſite (or elſe why do I chooſe it?) then by the ſame reaſon it is better to all, and at leaſt when my own prejudice, or intereſt comes not between, I have no pretence of objection that involves not a contradiction; and accuſe my ſelf of the breach of all the Laws of Conſcience, Reaſon, and Equity, if I do not what I cannot but judg, and do ſo every day, really beſt, and moſt eligible.

3. In other Caſes where my thus dealing may ſeem to reſtrain thoſe benefits, which otherwiſe I could wiſh to my ſelf, yet is it moſt reaſonable, and equal, that the conveniencies of Humane Life ſhould be diſtributed by ſuch meaſures, while no axiom upon which

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Mathematical demonſtration is built can plead clearer evidence than the Foundation of this. If there it muſt be received as undeniably and immutably true. *Si æqualia æqualibus addas, tota ſunt æqualia. Si ab æqualibus æqualia demas, quæ remanent erunt æqualia.* The ſame is this, at leaſt on the one ſide, changing but things into perſons, *paria paribus conveniunt*: *like things agree to like perſons.* So that whatever is fit for, or due to me, muſt be by the ſame reaſon for, and to another in the ſame circumſtances. All men naturally, as ſuch, are equal, ſtand upon even terms, and level ground; and if Society, Compact, and the conſequences thereof have made any difference in the conditions of men, that alters not the Caſe here; becauſe the preſent Precept puts, or ſuppoſes us intirely in the ſame ſtate, or capacity, ere it determine, or equalize our mutual dues, and obligations.

So that as ſure as there is any ſuch thing as right or wrong, reaſonable, or unreaſonable, equal, or unequal, and thoſe muſt be as certain, and evident as any other Relation whatever; of agreeable, or diſagreeable; beneficial, or hurtful; true, or falſe; ſtraight, or crooked, *&c.* which all Self-Love muſt derive from the ſuppoſed difference

ference of, and ſubſiſt by: So unavoidably muſt the better part be involved in this direction.

But that I may begin, and end with ſame perſons here (who too oft before make violent attempts upon thoſe fixt boundaries, and ſo are like to be little moved by ſuch Topicks) I add in the Fourth and Laſt place, in their own way of reaſoning, There is no other poſſible Foundation of Society, and ſo of Peace, and Self-preſervation involved therein, than the ſuppoſed obſervance of this Law. For if you love your ſelf, ſo does every one beſide, and may do as much, and therefore can never be ſuppoſed to agree in any thing, which provides not equally for his concerns as yours, and puts him not in a like capacity of enjoying what he deſires. I appeal to the moſt partial, whether all perſons are like to meet in what only takes care for one, or whether any other Rule, or miſapplication of this, give ſo large as well as ſo equal, a proviſion for more, yea for all; ſo that it has not only as much of abſtracted reaſon, but of private intereſt, and ſafety, as it's poſſible for any general one to have; wherein alone the concerns of the community are moſt nearly united: and does not only follow that order in which God, and Na-

ture have plac'd us: But the other fancied Originals of Society fall in pieces without it. Whence *Aristotle* in his Life by *Laertius*, is made to give it as a Rule of Friendship, which would most difficultly be reduc'd to any other; and *Mecænas* in that famous Oration of his to *Augustus* in *Dion Cassius* (one of the Monuments of Antiquity of greatest name left us from the common Deluge) concerning the undertaking, and management of the *Roman* Empire; gives it him as the great and compleatest Rule of Government, which challenges an eminency of all most transcendent, *So govern others as you would be governed your self.* But our Blessed Lord more wisely, and charitably prescribes it, as an universal Law to all, while he supposes, or makes them mutually cordial Friends, and intirely concerned for each others good, and welfare, as their peculiar care and trust.

Diog. Laert. l. 5. p. 313. Compare *Aristotle de moribus.* l. 9. c. 4. p. 148.

Πρὸς δὲ τὸν φίλον ἔχειν, ὥσπερ πρὸς ἑαυτὸν, ἔστι γὰρ ὁ φίλος ἄλλος αὐτός.

Dion Cassius l. 52. p. 492. 493.

Ἐν δ' οὖν ἐν κεφαλαίῳ, καὶ κατὰ τῶν εἰρημένων, καὶ κατὰ τῶν λοιπῶν φράσω· ἂν γὰρ ὅσα, ἂν ἕτερον τινὰ ἄρξαντα σοῦ ποιεῖν ἐθελήσῃς ταῦτα αὐτὸς αὐτεπάγγελτος πράσσῃς, οὔτε τὶ ἁμαρτήσῃ, καὶ πάντα κατορθώσεις, &c.

3. What may yet farther commend this Rule is its plain easiness, and suitableness to present use; while Laws, if otherwise never so rational, and useful, if withall obscure, perplext, and over-numerous, may prove a snare, rather than a support; make more Controversies than they decide; lose much of their strength, and force by being spun

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out into nice and ſubtle diſputes: and fall ſhort of their aim by not reaching the greater part of them, whom they deſigned to direct: who either have not leiſure ſufficient to attend, or capacities to underſtand them, or ready ſagacity to apply them in opportunities of Action. In contradiſtinction to which, and ſuch like inconveniencies, here is a Law always at hand, which every man carries about in his own breaſt, legible to him that knows no Letters, open and obvious to the moſt rude and ignorant, which the worſt memory cannot forget, the ſuddeneſt ſurprize prevent, nor the moſt wilful blindneſs conceal: to come at which, we are not forced to ſearch Ancient Records, or dark Repoſitories; to revolve and ruminate upon old dark ſentences, or new finer gloſſes; not to rove about the world to examine the various Cuſtoms and Conſtitutions of Countries; not to ſoar as high, as Heaven, or dive as low, as Hell, in queſt of our Duty; after all other pains return into your ſelf, and look into your own heart, where you may oft find it ſooner, and read it clearer than any where beſide. The Gentiles, ſays St. *Paul*, *Rom.* ii. 14, 15. *Having not the Law, do by nature the things contained in the Law, theſe having not the Law, are a Law unto themſelves, and ſhew*

the work of the Law written in their hearts, their Conſcience in the mean time accuſing, or excuſing one another. Where can we diſcern more lively Characters, and a fairer Tranſcript of this *non ſcriptæ ſed natæ legis*, as the Orator ſtiles it, than in this Maxim? whence St. *Chryſoſtom* on my Text, ὅθεν δῆλον ὅτι κατὰ φύσιν ἡμῖν ἀρετὴ, καὶ οἴκοθεν τὰ δέοντα ἅπαντες ἴσμεν, &c.

Tom.2.p.545 orat. pro T. Annio Milone. Tom. 2. edit. Savil.p.165.

Of which what farther evidence can be expected than the experience of the even Infant Age, where the knowledg of other Laws never yet came, amidſt the little tranſactions of which, how oft do we hear ſuch like complaints and expoſtulations with each other when aggrieved? This I would, or this I would not have done to you; implying their native ſence of a like obligation on the other.

Again, this will readily deſcend to each ſingle Caſe, and may be eaſily accommodated to every emergence thereof, which other Precepts muſt infinitely, and endleſly multiply in their attempts towards: However involved with difficulties, or full of various windings and turnings, this queſtion is ſoon ask'd, and almoſt as ſoon anſwer'd, What we ſhould deſire, and expect to be done unto us (*rebus ſic ſtantibus*), that if not always abſolutely, yet is moſt likely to be our preſent Duty to others;

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if not what we are ſtrictly bound to, yet is uſually what is moſt ſafe and innocent; if no other command bind it upon us, yet our own choice generally does, and convicts us of guilt in the Breach.

This proves the moſt faithful, and impartial Monitor, a voice ſtill ſounding in our Ears, flee we never ſo faſt from it, *This is the way, walk in it.* Every man may ſoon, and is very ready to put himſelf in his Neighbours circumſtances, and is as quick in determining what he would have done unto him, you need not doubt his choice, or that he ſhould take up ſhort of his due; leſs we cannot aſcribe, more we may add to him.

And becauſe we are ſo ſagacious in finding, and improving every hint, that makes for our own intereſt, therefore we are here moſt advantagiouſly directed to put our ſelves into his Caſe; which, if any thing, is like to give us the faireſt, and fulleſt proſpect of his due, and the moſt pathetick motive not in the leaſt to detract from it.

Neither lies there any exception againſt ſo ſuitable a Precept, according to which we are made our own Judges, and our own Lawgivers; our own Accuſers, or our own Compurgators; can you deſire more kind, and indulgent,

dulgent, ones? Can you complain of that Burden, which you impoſe on your ſelf, and think that a grievance, with which your own happineſs is ſo twiſted? Muſt your will be a Law to others, and ought it not to be ſo firſt to your ſelf? What you have already judged beſt, when to be done to you, is it quite contrary, when to be done by you, and the caſe in nothing elſe altered? So that whatever ſuſpition, or prejudice may lie againſt any other, none ſure can againſt our own voice, and determination, which this only ties us up to. Wherefore no Precept can be conceiv'd preſt with fewer incumbrances, darkned with leſs intricacy, open to larger uſe, readier to preſent application, more obvious to all apprehenſions, fitter to ſupply all other defects and loſſes, and more ſafely to interpret moſt other injunctions, than this of my Text. *Summa omnium quæ docet lex, & Prophetæ, quos ſi aut non vacat, aut per inſcitiam non poteſt evolvere, habet domi regulam*, &c. as *Eraſmus* in his Paraphraſe.

Which brings me to the Fourth and Laſt particular, and part of my Text, the Divine Authority, and Sanction of this Rule expreſt in the laſt words, *This is the Law and the Prophets.*

I have hitherto conſidered it as the dictate of uncorrupt Nature, and unbyaſt Reaſon by its own

own innate light, and ſo have purpoſely omitted other confirmation thereof. But if any thing ſeem ſtill wanting to compleat the farther eſtabliſhment of it for a Law, and to raiſe a more Religious Veneration to its Obſervance, that is abundantly ſupplied by this laſt clauſe: this is not only to act agreeably to the moſt improved Reaſon, but alſo Divine Revelation; not meerly to follow the Laws of Nature, but of God over and above: being ſtrengthened by this his double Sanction, which twofold Cord ſure is not eaſily broken; to its own intrinſick lovelineſs, it hath all the poſitive enforcements, and authority of an immediate Heavenly injunction, *This is the Law*, &c.

In which words our Saviour ſeems to go further yet. It is not only a ſingle Command, however ſolemnly Enacted in the Law, confirmed, and renewed by the ſucceeding Prophets; but as it were the ſum, and recapitulation of the whole: As if all together reduc'd into one ſhort *Epitome*, and *Breviate*, running through every Precept, and almoſt as oft repeated, as there are any Inſtructions given; ſo that go through the whole Scripture, at leaſt that part of it which concerns our deportment towards each other; whereſoever you pitch, on whatſoever you ſtop, you cannot but meet

meet the true purport, and design of this; though not in the same terms, yet in sence. So that if all the Offices, and single Duties of Humane Life scattered in the Sacred Volumes, may be included in one common direction, it can hardly be done in fewer words, and more comprehensive of all, than this.

Also it's not only the Law, and the Prophets, but the Gospel too, where our Lord most expresly enjoins it, here, and in St. *Luke* vi. 31. and some Copys added it to the Apostolick Cannons, *Acts* xv. 29. His Precepts also are more nearly suited, and accommodated thereto, where there seem's any difference, being more covertly, and by consequence delivered of old. Wherefore some Copys Read it in my Text ὅτι οὗτος, or οὗτος, so, or to this effect are the Law, and Prophets; others, as we, ὅτι οὗτος, *This is the Law*, &c.

Here I shall, (1.) mark out some general Commands of each Testament, which seem of the same import with this.

2. The Universal extent ascribed to such Commands.

3. How far involved in other more particular and remote.

4. The relation it may stand in to, and the influence it hath upon even the Duties of the

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First Table, which we owe most immediately to God himself, to give it so great a Character, as in the close of my Text.

In order to the first may be observed indeed, that it is no where in expres terms in the Old Testament, or the Canonical Books; that which comes neareſt, is in the Apocryphal, *Tobit* v. 15. *Do that to no man which thou hateſt*, where the negative part of it, is somwhat the same. But the positive sence is in many places, as *Levit.* xix. 18. *Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thy ſelf*, oft referred to in the New Testament. Now no consequence can be more direct and natural, than that if we love him as our selves, we shall do to him what we would have done to our selves, that only in the strictnes of the Letter, determining the inward Principle, and Disposition of the mind; this the outward suitable Expression thereof, and Action. To the same purpose may be Interpreted those many places concerning not only their Just, but Charitable, Humane, and Friendly deportment towards all, especially the Poor, the Widow, the Fatherless, *Deut.* xv. 12, *&c.* Yea, the stranger, and their very servants, *Deut.* xvi. 11, 12, *&c.* While it comes in so often in the close, and as the strongest enforcement of all, *Thou ſhalt remember thou was a bond-man, or a*

ſtranger in the Land of Egypt; implying their obligation to recollect, what though they had not, yet they could not but have wiſht for, and might reaſonably have expected to have been done to them, and therefore ſo ſhould now do to others; nay this very conſideration is expreſly annext to the fore-cited Precept of loving our Neighbor as our ſelves, *Levit.* xix. 34. Alike may be applied that concerning helping an Enemy in his diſtreſs, *Exod.* xxiii. 4. Yea moſt in the beginning of that Chapter, ſo alſo concerning not rejoycing at his calamity. *Prov.* xxiv. 17. Yea rather multiplying benefits upon him. *Prov.* xxv. 21. So the Pſalmiſts appeal and profeſſion, *Pſal.* vii. 4. *If I have rewarded evil to him that was at peace with me*, &c. See alſo *Heb.* xiii. 3. *Remember them in bonds as bound with them, and them which ſuffer adverſity as your ſelves in the body*: To omit others in the New Teſtament, where many things ſeem added; to return Good for Evil; Bleſſing, for Curſes; to love them that hate us, to be merciful and kind to all, even the unthankful; leſs cannot, more may, be included, than what is here expreſt.

2. The large extent aſcribed to ſuch Commands, eſpecially in the New Teſtament, ſuitable to the declaration in my Text, *Matth.* xxii. 36, &c. in anſwer to that queſtion, *Which*

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is the great Commandment of the Law? Our Lord replies, firſt, *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God*, &c. and the ſecond is like unto it, *Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thy ſelf, on theſe two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.* So *Mark* xii. 30, *&c.* ſuitably St. *Paul*, and more cloſe to my Text, *Gal.* v. 14. *For all the Law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thy ſelf*; which St. *James*, c. ii. 8. 9. calls the Royal Law, which fulfilling we ſhall do well. Again others particularly are ſummed up in it, *Rom.* xiii. 9. After reckoning up the five negative Precepts of the ſecond Table, he ſubjoins, *If there be any other Commandment, it's briefly comprehended, or recapitulated in this ſaying, namely, Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thy ſelf*; In the Verſe before, *He that loveth another hath fulfilled the Law*; in the Verſe after, *Love is the fulfilling of the Law.* So our Lord ſeems to ſum up many in it, *Matth.* xix. 18, 19.

3. Other Precepts more remote ſeverally involve the ſame ſence with this, whatever expreſſions of Juſtice, and Charity are provided for in them ſingly, are here univerſally, and together; that is for inſtance, juſt Weights and Meaſures, an equal Ballance, that we *have not an Ephah, and an Ephah*, as the Hebrew phraſeth the falſe and deceitful, one to buy, and

another to ſell with, ſo in all other caſes moſt ſtraightly forbid, as a plain intrenchment upon this Rule, not doing as we would be done by. So to be true to our truſt, to ſpeak as we think, and act as we ſpeak, to do violence to no man, to defraud, defame, or reproach none, to preſerve every ones dues, and ſecure his right, what is it but to keep cloſe to this Rule? Alſo to find pity, and relief in our diſtreſs, and extremity; to have our wounds cloſed, and not widened; our diſtractions compoſed, and not heightned; our miſery as much as may be diminiſhed, and our happineſs advanc'd, are every ones choice for himſelf, and ſo more become his Duty to others. It were eaſie to go through moſt Commands, take almoſt any of them ſeverally, and conſider what it is they injoin upon all, and bethink your ſelves whether you would not chooſe it rather than the contrary; in all caſes to receive your due, ofe over and above, good will, and friendly aſſiſtance from all; and can any thing be as more equal, ſo more deſirable?

If there be any caſe like an exemption, it ſeems that of ſevere, eſpecially capital puniſhments, which as they are not excluded by all the Precepts of Chriſtian mercy, and compaſſion, which would be cruelty to the far greater,

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as better part (and this must not as I said, be interpreted to certainly vacate, and frustrate any other;) so though he that suffers may possibly always desire pardon, and think himself as ready universally to give it: Yet he that inflicts it, being under less prejudice, may conclude that were he in the same case, he ought not to expect it, and that where so many others are concerned, by this Rule barely, it can hardly be in his power always to give it.

4. In order to the enlargement of this Rule, and it's truly Religious, and Spiritual, as meer Moral worth, may be considered the respect it bears to, and the influence it hath upon even the Duties of the First Table immediately towards God, which though not directly, yet by some consequence may be included, or supposed therein. This contains an universal Principle of Justice, and Equity; of giving to every one what belongs to him, is due and proper to his state; and so may be applied to all acts of Piety indispensably due to God, as such, without the almost Blasphemous presumption of but supposing our selves in his place. Also the true love of our Neighbour, which this supposes, and expresses, must be founded in, and can only be preserved, and quickned by the true love of God, which is the sum of the first Table:

Table: But these I need not pursue, nor yet St. *Augustines* Argument in the matter in hand, *Qui proximum diligit, ipsam diligit dilectionem, Deus autem dilectio est*, according to that, *John* i. 4, 8, 16. which especially as improved by the Schoolmen, would lead to somewhat too nice, or too mystical for me.

l. 3. *De Trinitate* l. 8. c. 7. *p.* 355.

In the mean while may be observed, the Scripture seems much more frequent, and partial in stating the mutual Offices we ow each other in acts consequent on this Rule, than the immediate outward expressions of Devotion towards God; seldom expostulates the want of these, but the defect of those fill the Law, and the Prophets, and the Gospels too with complaints. See the first of *Isaiah* throughout, and many more exhorting them to show the truth of their Religion, that Faith, that Fear, and Love of God in acts of Justice, and Mercy, rather than Pompous Oblations, or Adorations, of which among others may be consulted, *Prov.* xxi. 3. *Jer.* vii. 4, 5, *&c.* xxii. 16. *Hos.* vi. 6. *Mich.* vi. 7, 8. *Mark* xii. 33. So in the account which our Saviour gives of the proceedings of the last day, (*Matth.* xxv. latter end) all the sentences to the good or bad, are proportioned to the observance, or breach of these.

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And as our future doom, ſo the ſucceſs of our preſent Praiers, and Devotions is made much to depend on this performance. In which may be obſerved the connection of this Verſe to the foregoing, in that it is, *If ye being evil know how to give good gifts unto your Children, how much more ſhall your Father which is in Heaven, give good things to them that ask him? Therefore all things*, &c. As if he ſhould ſay, there is nothing wanting to ſecure your petitions from diſappointment, but your not anſwering other mens equal requeſts from you. God is infinitely more good, and ſo more ready to ſupply you, than the moſt indulgent Parent his own Son. But if you expect God ſhould fulfil your deſires, you muſt (if I may ſpeak it with reverence) his. He is far removed in perſon, and can receive nothing properly from you; in part therefore transfers his right to his Creatures, for their neceſſary ſupport, and makes your dealing with them, the ordinary Rule, and Meaſure of his Diſpenſations to you. That this is no forc'd interpretation (inſiſted particularly on by St. *Chryſoſtom*, on my Text) appears by other expreſs places; our Lords reflection upon his own prayer, *Matth.* vi. 14. 15. *If ye forgive men their Treſpaſſes, your Heavenly Father will alſo forgive you*, &c. and to the ſame purpoſe

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he denounces upon the omiſſion, Ch.xviii. 35. In which alſo may be farther conſulted, *Matth.* vii. 1,2. *Luke* vi. 37, 38. *Rom.* ii. 1,2,3. By which and divers like, he ſhews how much he makes our actions dependant on this Rule, the ſquare of his diſtributions, whether of Juſtice, or Mercy; and that he meaſures chiefly our performances even of Piety to himſelf, and mainly proportions our after-rewards, and hopes from him by theſe like Offices, more than by other even directer and immediate outward expreſſions of Devotion to himſelf; which he ſeems ſparing in requiring or commending; cautious in extending to their utmoſt bounds; or cheriſhing every plauſible pretence thereto, farther than may ſtrongly guard, and miniſter Spiritual Life to the other; knowing how oft we are miſtaken, how eaſily ſeduc'd out of the way, how ſoon tranſported beyond our line in pretences to ſuch raiſed, and ſtill aſpiring Paſſions; and how unfit ordinarily we are to manage, and govern them, eſpecially in the higheſt tranſports towards ſuch objects, ſo much above the level of Human circumſtances: that when ſincere, but not the beſt grounded, or guarded, yet rarely are they unmixt with ſome Allay of Superſtition, or Enthuſiaſm.

thuſiaſm. But when heedleſly indulg'd, and let looſe, ſoon paſs into the moſt Phrenſical extravagances. Wherefore the Scripture ſeems to take more care to fence in, than miniſter fuel to thoſe however ſacred flames; and expreſſes moſtly our Duty to God in general terms, and inward acts of *loving him with all your heart, fearing him, walking humbly with him*, &c. But Offices of Righteouſneſs, and Charity fill every page, are more poſitive, punctual, and expreſs; the chief ſubject matter of Laws reſpecting us in ſociety, wherein we ſtand upon even terms one with another; and the effects of which are preſently, and ſenſibly beneficial, the ſtay and ſupport of mankind; the common conveyance of all the comforts of this Life, and the moſt advantageous opportunity of proviſion for the next. So though this Precept ſeem literally, and moſt ſtrictly to reſpect the Second Table only: yet hath it many ſignatures, and evidences of the completion of the Firſt: The Bond of all Society, and neareſt Original of all Juſtice, and Equity: The grand Pattern, and exemplar of all Laws, and Conſtitutions: The Epitome of our whole Duty revealed, or innate: The Law, Prophets, and Goſpel in one: The *end of the Commandments*: The faireſt tranſcript of the firſt, and

everlasting Righteousness: The most perfect summary of Gods will, and the exactest measure of his present, and after Dispensations; which may justly give it so high a Character in the close of my Text. *This is the Law and the Prophets.*

From whence we may, first, admire the most apparent Equity, and impartiality of the Divine Laws, that so unexceptionably, and universally as much as possible provide for the good of all: God As one common Parent producing all alike, so equally takes care of, and guards the Concerns of all; and made their happiness run in the same Channel, that one part might not rejoyce alone, nor be put to seek, nor hope to find it apart from others: Thus forcing us into all amicable Society supposed, and much strengthned by these prime dictates of God and Nature: adding all the force of his authority and injunction to fasten our mutual dependences, and enlarge the most diffusive felicity. He has thus given every other man as sure hold of, and as good an interest in you, as you in him; and made your willingness to receive, an equal obligation in you to give, and so may appeal to your own judgment, *Are not my ways equal?* shews that he is no respecter of persons in what he

he commands, no more than in what he distributes.

2. Here also we ought to adore the infinite condescension of our great Law-giver, that not only makes his own will, but our will our law; and shews how tender he is of our good, that he makes our own desires the frequent measure of his Precepts; and how far he delights in the welfare of his creatures, in that he abridges them not the loving and doing good to themselves, but makes it the matter and pattern of their actions to others; and never finds fault with the excess of the one, when not perverted to obstruct or vacate the other. He is pleased you should love your self as much as you can, the more the better, so you love your Neighbour as your self. St. *Chrysostom* proving in us a natural knowledge of good and evil, and that from my Text, as before, subjoyns this excellent gloss thereon, *There is no need of many words, long laws, or various instructions, let your own will be your Law. You would receive good, do good to another: you would find mercy, shew it to your Neighbour: you would be praised, praise others: you would be loved, love: you would enjoy preheminence, or advantages, be as forward to yield them first to others: Be you thus your Judg, and Lawgiver of your own life.*

Οὐ χρεία πολλῶν λόγων· οὐδὲ μακροτέρων νόμων, οὐδὲ διδασκαλίας ποικίλης· τὸ θέλημα σοῦ γενέσθω νόμος. Θέλεις εὐεργετεῖσθαι, εὐεργέτησον ἕτερον· θέλεις ἐλεεῖσθαι, ἐλέησον τὸν πλησίον· θέλεις ἐπαινεῖσθαι, ἐπαίνεσον ἕτερον· θέλεις ἀγαπᾶσθαι, φίλησον· θέλεις τῶν προτείων ἀπολαύειν, παραχώρησον ἑτέρῳ πρότερον τούτων· Σὺ γενοῦ δικαστὴς, σὺ γενοῦ νομοθέτης τῆς ἑαυτοῦ ζωῆς.

Orat. 13. *Ad Pop. antioch.* p. 549.

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Nothing may more ingratiate unto us his most Divine and excellent Precepts, than the consideration how, as near as possible, they stoop to our own wishes, and desire nothing may more shame, and confound, convict, and condemn all obstinate disobedience thereto, or transgression thereof, than to consider it as a violence offered to our selves, as God: and one way, or other the not doing as we would be done unto.

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